



Section 5: Program Partners

Getting Involved:

The Child, Adolescent and Family Branch of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services and National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day



What is National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day?

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services is launching an annual national initiative called "National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day." National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is designated as a day in May of each year to coincide with "May Is Mental Health Month." This day presents an opportunity for SAMHSA programs within the Child, Adolescent and Family Branch (CAFB) of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services and children's mental health initiatives to promote resilience, recovery, and the transformation of mental health services delivery for children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families.

The theme of the inaugural celebration of National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is "Thriving in the Community." Children's mental health initiatives will hold similar events and other activities throughout the country to build awareness that children's mental health needs are real and that progress is being made toward developing effective strategies for achieving the vision of a life in the community for everyone.

Why is CAFB participating in National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day?

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day offers CAFB an opportunity to support system of care communities across the Nation in their efforts to promote resilience, recovery, and the transformation of mental health services delivery for children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families.

A system of care is a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that are organized to meet the challenges of children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families. Families and youth work in partnership with public and private organizations to design mental health services and supports that are effective, that build on the strengths of individuals, and that address each person's cultural and linguistic needs. A system of care helps children, youth and families function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

Systems of care is not a program—it is a philosophy of how care should be delivered. Systems of care is an approach to services that recognizes the importance of family, school, and community, and seeks to promote the full potential of every child and youth by addressing their physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural, and social needs.

The Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families provides funding for the improvement and expansion of systems of care to meet the needs of children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families. States, communities,



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territories, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations are eligible for the program, which was first authorized in 1992. Since that year, the program has funded 121 communities across the country. There are currently 56 funded communities and 65 formerly funded programs.

In addition to the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families, other CAFB programs include:

- Statewide Family Networks
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Substance Abuse State Infrastructure Grants (CA-SIG)
- Circles of Care
- Partnerships for Youth Transition

How can CAFB programs get involved?

CAFB programs can become involved in National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in several ways. For example, a program may choose to stage talent shows, art exhibits, essay writing contests, sports competitions, or festivities to demonstrate how children and youth in systems of care and their families are thriving in the community. Another event may include partnering with other local children's mental health initiatives to engage the media and to educate local policymakers on effective practices for meeting the mental health needs of children, youth, and families.

Where can I get more information about National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day?

Information and materials on National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day are available online at www.systemsofcare.samhsa.gov.